



J. TYLER McCaULEY  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

## COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

KENNETH HAHN HALL OF ADMINISTRATION  
500 WEST TEMPLE STREET, ROOM 525  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012-2766  
PHONE: (213) 974-8301 FAX: (213) 626-5427

July 3, 2002

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: J. Tyler McCauley  
Auditor-Controller

Subject: **MANAGEMENT AUDIT OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND  
FAMILY SERVICES— FOURTH RECOMMENDATION FOLLOW UP  
REPORT**

On December 15, 1998, your Board requested progress reports on the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) implementation of the recommendations in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) Phase I and II, 1998 management audits. This is our fourth follow up report.

### **Background/Purpose**

Phase I of the management audit contained 15 recommendations addressing issues such as the Department's leadership, administrative capabilities and organizational structure, and the need for the Department to develop and implement a formal strategic plan. Phase II contained 65 recommendations addressing issues such as the Department's internal and interagency processes, resources, technology, and the people and culture of the Department.

The purpose of our follow up review was to assess the Department's progress in implementing PWC's Phase I and II recommendations since our last status report. In this follow-up, we reviewed the 44 remaining recommendations that had not been previously reported as implemented (eight Phase I recommendations and 36 Phase II recommendations).

### **Summary of Findings**

Overall, the Department continues to make progress in implementing recommendations in the areas of case flow redesign, resource, and organizational structure. We determined that the Department has implemented 22 out of the 44 recommendations reviewed, is in progress of implementing 20, and has taken no action on one. One recommendation, the revision of job titles (#36), is in progress and is the responsibility

of the County Department of Human Resources, not DCFS. To date, the Department has implemented 58 (73%) of the 80 recommendations. The remaining recommendations focus on the development of client outcomes, the piloting of the redesigned case flow process and the development of employee and customer satisfaction surveys.

The Department of Children and Family Services should continue to provide the Board with a report on the status of the report recommendations until they are implemented.

Details of our findings are discussed in the attached report.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with DCFS management on July 3, 2002. The Department will provide the Board with semi-annual reports on the status of the remaining recommendations.

We thank DCFS management and staff for their cooperation and assistance during our review. If you have any questions, please contact me or your staff may contact DeWitt Roberts at (213) 974-0301.

JTM:PTM:DR:JK

Attachments

- c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Department of Children and Family Services**  
Anita M. Bock, Director  
Rufus White, Chief Deputy Director  
Genevra Gilden, Chief, Quality Assurance Division  
Michael J. Henry, Department of Human Resources  
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer  
Audit Committee  
Public Information Office

**Department of Children and Family Services**  
**PriceWaterhouseCoopers Management Audit**  
**Fourth Recommendation Follow Up Report**

**Background**

On December 15, 1998, your Board requested progress reports on the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) implementation of the recommendations in the PriceWaterhouseCoopers (PWC) 1998 management audit. This is our fourth follow up report.

**Scope and Objectives**

The purpose of our follow up review was to assess the Department's progress in implementing PWC's Phase I and II recommendations since our last status report. In this follow-up, we reviewed the 44 recommendations that had not previously been reported as implemented, (eight Phase I recommendations and 36 Phase II recommendations).

Our review consisted of interviews with DCFS management and staff, a review of the Department's policies and procedures, and other specific testwork necessary to assess the Department's efforts at implementing these recommendations and meeting the goals set forth in the PWC report.

**Summary/Conclusions**

Overall, the Department continues to make progress in implementing the recommendations. The Department has implemented 22 out of the 44 recommendations reviewed, is in progress of implementing 20, and has not yet taken action on one. One recommendation (#36), the revision of job titles, is in progress and is the responsibility of the County Department of Human Resources, not DCFS.

**Status of Recommendations**

**Phase I Recommendations**

The Phase I report was an assessment of the Department's leadership, planning, administration, and general organization. The following discusses the status of the eight Phase I recommendations we reviewed, including an overview of actions taken by the Department to date, and our assessment of their progress towards fully implementing these recommendations. We have numbered the recommendations as they appear in the PWC report.

## LEADERSHIP RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation L-1**

***The leadership structure of the Department should be modified to stress the externally-focused emphasis of the Director position, and the Chief Deputy Director Position, with its internally-focused, operational, and administrative role, should be reinstated.***

#### **Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit found the leadership and management of DCFS was concentrated in the Director position. The audit recommended that the Chief Deputy Director should be responsible for operational activities that the Director, at that time, was performing.

In March 2002, the Department hired a Chief Deputy Director, who is responsible for overseeing administrative functions, including finance and budget, information technology, human resources and the Department's performance-based management efforts. The Director will now be able to spend more time on activities dealing with non-administrative matters. Since DCFS hired a Chief Deputy Director to assume operational and administrative duties, we consider this recommendation implemented.

### **Recommendation L-3**

***Develop and implement intentional team-building activities and incentives for DCFS leadership, such as working retreats, team projects, and team-oriented Management Appraisal Plan (MAP) goals.***

#### **Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit suggested DCFS promote team building on an ongoing basis through goals that emphasize teamwork and projects that explicitly call for management to work together.

In our last review, we noted that DCFS had implemented quarterly working retreats to promote team building and share effective leadership techniques. Since then, DCFS stated it revised all manager MAP goals to include team-oriented components. We reviewed the MAP goals for one Bureau Chief and found they included both teamwork and Strategic Plan Phase II goals for the rating period. The Department's Strategic Plan Phase II goals also include goals which require management to work together. Based on these efforts, we consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation L-4**

***Implement a standard process for evaluating and prioritizing input from external bodies prior to committing to new activities.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recognized that a large number of stakeholders desire to provide input and direction to DCFS. With so many voices offering guidance, the audit recommended the Department develop a standardized process for addressing proposals from external bodies.

In December 2001, DCFS issued a policy directive that requires the Department's Executive Council to perform a thorough analysis of all proposals received from outside agencies and advisory bodies. The Executive Council assesses the program, policy, and fiscal suitability of each initiative as well as its conformance with the Department's mission and strategic plan. We reviewed a request for a policy change submitted by a Board Office to the Department and we noted that the affected Bureau Chief first reviewed the issue and then forwarded a "Request for Decision" to the Executive Council for approval. Since the Department established a formal policy for evaluating and prioritizing input from external stakeholders, we consider this recommendation implemented.

**PLANNING PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation P-3 and P-5**

***Develop Annual Regional Operations Plans.***

***Realistically link [Regional Operations Plans] desired outcomes to [actual and measurable] capacity constraints in plan development.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended the Department develop annual Regional Operation Plans and develop realistic measures of their success based on actual performance.

In November 2001, the Department drafted Business Plans by Service Planning Area (SPA). The Plans include measurable outcomes such as the number of required home visits. The Plans are currently under review by Department management. Once management approves the Plans, we will consider these recommendations implemented.

**Recommendation P-4**

***Align and integrate project and grants management to fully support core program operations.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended the Department enhance its grants efforts and integrate these efforts into the Department's funding strategy.

Effective April 2001, DCFS hired a Grants Manager to assist the Department in grant identification and grant proposal writing. In September 2001, the Quality and Productivity Commission approved a grant of \$56,890 for the Department to establish a fully trained team in grants research and writing, including the hiring of a consultant to help define the team's mission and responsibilities. The Department anticipates signing the consultant's contract shortly. Upon finalization of the contract, the consultant and the Grants Manager will select individuals for the team. Once the Department has established its grants team, and the team has developed policies and procedures for securing grant funds, we will consider this recommendation fully implemented.

**Recommendation P-6**

***Define, measure and report client outcomes.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended the Department develop and report performance measurements related to client activities and outcomes.

The Department is currently collecting and analyzing some client activity data through its Monthly Management Report and its monthly KidStat meetings. KidStat (as further discussed in Phase II Recommendation 19) is an effort by the Department to integrate data analysis into its daily operations. However, the Department has not yet developed and reported client outcome measurements, such as the number and percentage of children who age out of the foster care system, or the number and percentage of children who remain in post-adoptive homes (two measures suggested in the audit.) Once DCFS develops, analyzes, and distributes relevant client outcome measurements, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation P-8**

***Design and implement a mechanism to ensure that elements of the Strategic Plan and other plans are clearly communicated to staff.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended that DCFS develop a system to clearly communicate elements of the Strategic and other departmental plans to staff.

The Department developed an Intranet, LAKids, in September 1997. Subsequent to the audit, the Department enhanced the Intranet to provide staff with links to policies and procedures and the Strategic Plan. Whenever the Department adds or updates a policy, the Intranet indicates a change has been made, and a link to the change is provided. As of March 2002, the Department had placed all policies on the Intranet. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**Phase II Recommendations**

The following discusses the status of each of the 36 Phase II recommendations we reviewed, including an overview of actions taken by the Department to date, and our assessment of their progress towards fully implementing these recommendations. We number the recommendations as they appear in the PWC report, although in some instances we present them out of sequential order for ease of discussion purposes.

**PROCESS RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 6**

***Redesign the case flow process.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended the Department streamline and revise the case flow process to provide a faster response for services and an emphasis, through the use of teams, on more thorough case evaluations and investigations.

DCFS finalized its draft of the redesigned case flow process in December 2001. The Department based the new design on a Point-of-Engagement Plan, which allows the Department to decide whether to detain a child or allow him or her to remain at home and receive community-based services. In addition, the redesigned case flow process requires team decision making throughout the process. For example, in addition to the case-carrying social worker, decision-making team members may include healthcare and mental health professionals, psychologists, educators, clergy, and family members.

The social workers union reviewed the draft redesigned process and identified workload concerns, which it is addressing with the Department. Once the union and the

Department resolve these concerns, the Department plans to pilot the redesigned case flow process in three of its regions. Since DCFS has completed the redesign, we consider this recommendation implemented.

### **Recommendation 7**

***Pilot the redesigned process.***

#### **Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended the Department pilot the redesigned case flow process in at least two different regions to determine the most effective team structure and to refine the timing of the “handing off” of cases among DCFS staff.

As discussed in Recommendation 6, DCFS finalized its draft of the redesigned case flow process. The Department plans to pilot the redesigned case flow process in three of its eight regions, pending union approval. The Department intends to update the process based on feedback in this pilot phase. We will consider this recommendation implemented after the Department completes the pilot and updates the process accordingly.

### **Recommendation 4**

***Institute a transition monitoring mechanism that incorporates performance measures that matter to the change program.***

#### **Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended that DCFS create a “change plan” for implementing improvements in the Department. The auditors recommended that the Department consider the recommendations in the report, in their totality, as the backbone of this “change plan.” The auditors noted that the planning and execution of the multi-disciplinary projects recommended in the audit would be complex. Therefore, they recommended that the Department establish a mechanism to monitor the Department’s performance against interim and ultimate targets in the “change plan.”

The Department has developed status reports regarding the implementation status of the recommendations. In addition, the Auditor-Controller’s office has reviewed DCFS’ implementation statuses and reported on them to the Board. Given the Department’s continued monitoring of implementation of the recommendations, we consider this recommendation implemented.



**Recommendation 9**

***Continue to streamline and automate paperwork for the redesign process.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

At the time of the audit, DCFS was in the process of streamlining paperwork in conjunction with its transition to the Child Welfare Services Case Management System (CWS/CMS). The audit recommended that, once DCFS finalized the redesigned case flow process, the Department review all documentation requirements and automate value-added forms.

Subsequent to the audit, DCFS requested permission from the State to automate the transfer of data from CWS/CMS directly into DCFS-required forms. At the current time, DCFS has automated 69 forms and the State has given the Department approval to automate additional forms in the future, if the need arises. In view of the Department's progress thus far in reducing its flow of paperwork and its plans to increase automation through CWS/CMS, we consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 10**

***Meet with stakeholders from the Dependency Court, County Counsel, and major law enforcement agencies to identify and analyze interagency business process issues and formulate solutions.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit found that although DCFS was active in a number of interagency forums that addressed high-level management issues, it did not have a process for analyzing micro-level interagency issues related to case flow. Examples of micro-level issues include evidence gathering techniques, court report writing, and court processes. The audit recommended the Department make efforts to identify and address micro-level issues with its interagency partners, which are primarily the Dependency Court, County Counsel, and law enforcement agencies.

DCFS has made a concerted effort to address micro-level issues with its interagency partners. For example, in September 2001, the Department appointed 20 CSWs as regional liaisons with law enforcement agencies. The liaisons also created an extensive, countywide list of law enforcement contacts. In addition, representatives from the Dependency Court and County Counsel with whom we spoke stated that regular cross training for CSWs has improved interagency relations. Based on the newly established forums for addressing micro-level interagency issues, we consider this recommendation implemented.

## RESOURCES RECOMMENDATIONS

### Recommendations 12 and 13

***Use the resources improvement team to improve the process for updating and distributing service referral information [through the Resource Directory].***

***Expand access to up-to-date countywide service referral information throughout the Department.***

### Current Status: IN PROGRESS

At the time of the audit, DCFS used a hard copy Resource Directory, which was a compilation of contact information for community-based agencies throughout the County. The audit found that the Resource Directory was dated; CSWs expressed frustration in referring clients to service agencies, only to later learn from clients that an agency's telephone number was incorrect or the agency had ceased operation. The audit recommended that DCFS create the position of Knowledge Manager who would have the responsibilities of updating the service referral information for departmental use.

DCFS is finalizing a contract with Infoline to provide up-to-date service referral information to staff, including capacity information, for County-approved agencies. This service referral database will replace the hard copy Resource Directory. This information will be available to DCFS staff through the Department's Intranet, LAKids. Although the Department has not created the position of Knowledge Manager as the audit recommended, its efforts to provide the same information through a contractor meets the intent of the recommendation. Once the Department makes the information available via LAKids, we will consider these recommendations implemented.

### Recommendations 14 and 15

***Invest in a Geographic Information System (GIS), and hire a data analyst with expertise in GIS-based analysis.***

***Conduct a thorough, geographically-based analysis of gaps in available resources at the community level, and develop plans to fill the gaps.***

### Current Status: IMPLEMENTED

The audit noted that DCFS did not have the capability to analyze gaps in resources at the community level, and recommended the Department invest in a system to provide geographically oriented resource and placement information. The audit recommended that DCFS hire at least one data analyst with expertise in GIS-based analysis to manage the system and produce analytic maps. Furthermore, the audit recommended a thorough analysis of service gaps, supported by analytic maps as persuasive

evidence for demonstrating the need for services. Program managers would then be responsible to develop plans to fill these gaps.

At the time of our last review, DCFS had begun to use the Arc View GIS software, on a limited basis, to map the location of community agencies providing child welfare services throughout the County. Since that time, the Department has established a GIS lab under the Bureau of Information Technology Services and has staffed the lab with three employees at the level of Data Analyst II to perform GIS based analyses.

Finally, we noted that data analysts perform analysis utilizing the GIS software, at the request of program managers. For example, the Family Preservation (FP) program manager requested an analysis of the geographic dispersion of certain ethnic populations countywide. This information was essential in the formation of a program designed to introduce FP services to these populations. Given the GIS infrastructure is in place and operational, we consider these recommendations implemented.

#### **Recommendation 16**

***Make Family Preservation, or other placement avoidance resources, available on a crisis basis.***

#### **Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit noted that the waiting period of up to ten days to initiate FP services was often too long to avoid placement in foster care. The audit recommended DCFS attempt to negotiate contracts with FP agencies to provide intensive services on an immediate, crisis basis. The audit also recommended that DCFS dedicate more of its financial resources to FP, either by diverting funds from existing programs or by seeking new funding, in order to increase the supply of services.

The Department's FP contract, effective July 2001, requires agency staff to respond to a family crisis within 3 hours. DCFS has also expanded FP into new geographic areas through the use of Long-Term Family Self Sufficiency funds and Commission for Children and Family (Proposition 10) funds. In light of the inclusion of "crisis intervention" in the current FP contract, and the program's new funding sources, we consider this recommendation implemented.

#### **Recommendation 17**

***Evaluate the Family Preservation program in terms of whether it reduces placements and/or recidivism.***

#### **Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit noted there were conflicting findings as to the success of FP programs in reducing out-of-home placements or recidivism. The audit stated that, while there

appeared to be a need for expanded FP services, additional services should not occur until the Department conducted a thorough assessment of the program's effectiveness.

Soon after DCFS expanded FP services in July 2001, it entered into two separate multi-year contracts for research on the effectiveness of FP services. One study will assess the program's ability to prevent out-of-home placement and the other will analyze recidivism among program participants. Since the studies are underway, we consider this recommendation implemented.

## PEOPLE AND CULTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

### **Recommendation 19**

***Develop and implement a formal communications plan.***

#### **Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit noted that barriers to communication affected DCFS' efficiency in delivering services to clients. The audit noted poor communication existed not only vertically, between managers and staff, but also horizontally from unit to unit and recommended DCFS implement a formal communications plan to help facilitate communication throughout the Department.

In response to the recommendation, the Department established the position of Administrative Services Manager III, under the Bureau of Administrative and Management Services, to be responsible for designing a Department-wide communications protocol. Although the Department has not yet filled this position, DCFS has introduced a number of initiatives that have enhanced intra-departmental communication. For example, in this fiscal year, the Department began to hold twice monthly KidStat meetings with up to 100 staff. KidStat is a performance-based management system used to improve the Department's effectiveness and efficiency by integrating data analysis into its daily operations. At the KidStat meetings, presenters provide data, data analysis, and trend analysis on cases in their specialized program areas and participants critique their analyses. Summaries of the KidStat presentations appear on the Department's Intranet. In addition, DCFS is utilizing an option by which social workers can access CWS/CMS data relating to cases outside of their own assigned caseload. The sharing of cases in this manner helps to enhance communications regarding case management.

Once the Department develops a formal communication plan, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 22**

***Improve professional development within DCFS.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended DCFS improve its professional development throughout the Department.

Effective March 2002, the Department began to enhance the professional development of its newly hired CSWs through the expansion of its nine-week Core Academy training. Over time, the Academy will consist of a one-year "academy/apprentice" program, which will combine classroom training, on-the-job training, and mentorship. As part of the new design, CSWs will choose an elected area of concentration and their final three months of training will focus on that area. Once DCFS has implemented the new Academy, experienced CSWs will be able to attend classes not previously offered. We consider this recommendation in progress.

**Recommendation 23**

***Develop, encourage, and institutionalize team-building into the case flow process.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended DCFS progress from using an assembly line approach to case processing, in which tasks are routinely "handed off" among workers, to a more collaborative, team-oriented approach. The audit suggested the Department accomplish this through the incorporation of team-oriented activities in the redesigned case flow process.

As discussed previously in Recommendation 6, the redesign of the case flow process is complete but has not yet been implemented because of union issues. Accordingly, we consider this recommendation in progress.

**Recommendation 26**

***Develop and implement a succession plan.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended DCFS develop a formal succession plan to provide for the replacement of personnel predicted to leave the organization in the future.

In the Spring 2001, DCFS began to develop a formal succession plan with guidance and technical assistance from the County Department of Human Resources (DHR).

Once the Department has developed a formal succession plan, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 27**

***Evaluate the effectiveness of various recruitment activities and expand/modify/discontinue as appropriate.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended that, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of its recruiting program, DCFS should track and evaluate data on its recruitment activities and events.

Currently, the County DHR is assisting DCFS with managing the human resource function. With the oversight of DHR, the Department has completed a comprehensive departmental recruitment plan, for both administrative and social work staff, which calls for recruiting at schools, job fairs, and social work conferences. Additionally, the plan includes various advertising efforts, including some targeted at Spanish speaking candidates. The Department recently began to collect data on its recruitment activities, but it has not yet formally evaluated the data to determine the effectiveness of its recruitment activities. We consider this recommendation to be in progress.

**Recommendation 29**

***Revise training curricula to support the changed case flow process and new culture, and activate incentives/disincentives to encourage employees to attend training.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended the Department revise its training program, as appropriate, to include the changes in the case flow process. In addition, the audit recommended the Department give special training to Emergency Response social workers, who are responsible for investigating and assessing referrals received through the Child Abuse Hotline (CAHL).

Beginning in January 2001, DCFS provided formal training for all 450 CSWs in the Bureau of Child Protection on triage and multi-disciplinary assessment as well as on the overall processing of cases. In addition to the training of CSWs, the Department has an on-going Core Management Program for upper and middle managers several times a year. This program emphasizes performance based management techniques for “front-end” services provided by the CAHL and Emergency Response. The intent of the training is to enable managers to instill necessary job skills in their assigned staff. In view of these training initiatives, we consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 30**

***Clarify the criteria used in making promotional decisions and disseminate this information to employees. Develop mechanisms to assist employees in attaining the competencies to make them promotable.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit noted that, despite the existence of a defined promotional sequence, many DCFS employees remained uncertain about the criteria used for making promotions. The audit recommended management clarify opportunities for advancement within the Department and develop mechanisms for assisting employees in obtaining the skills required for success at higher levels.

The Department publicizes bulletins regarding internal openings on their Intranet, LAKids. The bulletins include the minimum job qualifications as well as other specialized skills desired. DCFS also offers a one-day training class, three times a year, for CSWs interested in supervisory positions. Finally, Department staff actively participate in both the Section Head and Division Chief training programs offered through the County DHR Training Academy. Collectively, these efforts satisfy the intent of the recommendation and we consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 32**

***Conduct an employee survey every 12 months and compare the results to the baseline established in the management audit's employee survey.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit included in its report an anonymous employee survey comprised of the following three parts: a) employee perceptions of the organization, b) demographic information on respondents including job classification, location, and tenure, and c) personal comments and feedback from respondents. The auditors analyzed the survey data using both descriptive techniques, such as means, relative rankings, and percentage of responses and inferential statistics such as Chi Square and ANOVA techniques. The audit recommended DCFS conduct a similar survey annually and compare the results to the baseline year.

In September 2001, DCFS formed the Office of Research and Planning (ORP) to assist in conducting internal studies. Staff from this Office will be responsible for developing and administering the employee satisfaction survey. Management stated it has not yet initiated the survey because of other, higher priority assignments. As soon as the Department administers an employee survey, and compares the results to the original survey conducted in the audit, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 35**

***Re-organize the uni-dimensional case processing teams into multidisciplinary teams.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit noted that DCFS was organized around specialized programs such as Emergency Response, Family Maintenance/Reunification, Permanency Planning, and Dependency Investigation. The audit found that this organizational structure often left employees unaware of the types of services provided by the Department as a whole. The audit stated that reorganization into multidisciplinary teams would facilitate the sharing of varied backgrounds to develop the best plan for the client. The audit believed that this understanding would translate into enhanced problem solving and service delivery.

As previously discussed in Recommendations 6 and 23, the redesign of the case flow process, which includes Team Decision Making, is pending resolution of union issues. Therefore, we consider this recommendation in progress.

**Recommendation 36**

***Consider revising current job functions and creating new client-focused job titles.***

**Current Status: NOT RESPONSIBLE**

The audit noted that within the job classification of Children's Social Worker (CSW) there was a variety of unique functions. The audit recommended DCFS re-examine, update, and create new job titles to reflect the underlying tasks performed by the employees.

County DHR is in the midst of a five-year program aimed at reducing the number of job classifications countywide. DHR is currently working with all County departments, including DCFS, to evaluate the various duties and skills required for each job classification.



**Recommendation 37**

***Use paraprofessionals to provide legal, placement, and emancipation support to the multidisciplinary teams.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended the Department use paraprofessionals to assist CSWs in day-to-day work activities.

Starting in March 2001, DCFS stationed County Counsel/paralegal teams in the Department's regional offices to assist CSWs with various services. These teams conduct training for DCFS on legal procedures, notices, waivers, and other legal matters. In addition, the County Counsel/paralegal teams are available for consultation with individual social workers. The Department's efforts satisfy the intention of this recommendation and we consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 38**

***Implement staggered shifts to better align workflow with regional staff on-duty.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit found that the Department's regional offices generally operated from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on business days, while its Child Abuse Hotline (CAHL) and Emergency Response Command Post (ERCP) operated 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, with three shifts of staff. The auditors noted that the regional hours of operation did not align with workload peaks; regional staff were going home for the day when the CAHL was receiving peak volumes of calls. The audit recommended that the Department pilot staggered shifts, including requiring ER regional staff to work until 11 p.m. In this manner, the ER regional staff would be able to investigate more cases, limiting the hand-offs from the ERCP to the regions.

In April 2002, the Bureau of Child Protection developed mini command posts to take some of the workload away from the ERCP. The mini command posts receive calls from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., thereby creating overlapping service with the ERCP during this time. Currently, DCFS is piloting the mini command posts in an office in each of four regions. The Department is also developing a plan to pilot staggered shifts starting in summer 2002. Once the Department has implemented the mini command posts and staggered shifts in all regions, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 39**

***Pilot the new organization structure with multi-disciplinary teams (Recommendation 35) and staggered shifts at one or two regions (Recommendation 38), adjust as necessary, and roll-out the new structure to all offices.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit suggested DCFS pilot the new organization structure, which includes multi-disciplinary teams and staggered shifts, and monitor progress. The audit also suggested soliciting feedback from the employees, updating the structure from lessons learned, and finally rolling out the structure to all offices.

The Department has implemented the multi-disciplinary teams as referenced in recommendation 35; however, they have not implemented staggered shifts. Once the Department has implemented the staggered shifts, and implemented the structure Department-wide, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 43**

***Establish a policy sub-team with a champion and functional experts.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

In an effort to assure the Department assesses, analyzes, and updates policies and procedures, the audit recommended that the Department establish a policy sub-team with a champion and functional experts.

At the time of the audit, DCFS' Policy/Training Section was understaffed and not able to perform the function of updating or developing policies and procedures in a timely manner. Currently, the section is fully staffed with a Division Chief, nine Children Services Administrators (CSA) I, two CSAs III, and one Human Service Administrator I. The policy section works closely with program staff in updating and/or developing policies and procedures. These developments have satisfied the intent of the recommendation. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 44**

***Complete the policy update and automation project in as timely a manner as possible.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

In an effort to make policies easier to understand, and minimize duplication, the audit recommended that the Department complete its plan to analyze and update the policies and to put the policies on the DCFS Intranet.

The Department has enhanced its Intranet, LAKids, to provide staff with a central location to obtain information regarding current policies and procedures. As of March 2002, the current policy handbooks (e.g., Child Welfare Service Handbook and Foster Care Eligibility Handbook) are online and accessible by all staff. We reviewed a number of policies and verified that they are regularly updated. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**TECHNOLOGY RECOMMENDATION****Recommendation 48**

***Establish realistic, universal expectations about staff use of CWS/CMS and enforce those standards.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended the Department persevere through the initial problems it encountered in the Department's transition to CWS/CMS. These problems included slowness when accessing the system, data entry fields that did not allow for easy correction, and system rigidity that prevented the merging of cases. The audit recommended DCFS set realistic goals for the usage of CWS/CMS by social workers and monitor progress towards those goals.

According to DCFS, the State has addressed nearly all of the technical difficulties present at the time of the PWC audit. The Department also reports that the system is significantly more stable and user-friendly. The Department is also exceeding the State's usage standards for CWS/CMS. In addition, we noted that the Department's Bureau of Information Technology Services actively monitors for compliance with State and Department usage standards. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 54**

***Convene a work group of Public Inquiry, Executive Office, and ARA's to improve the turnaround time for case inquiries.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit determined that the response time for case inquiries was three to five business days. The audit recommended that the Department convene a workgroup of Public Inquiry, Executive Office, and Assistant Regional Administrators (ARAs) to determine if the three to five day response timeframe was realistic, and if not, improve the response time for case inquiries.

The Public Inquiry Control System (PICS), established in December 1999, tracks all case inquiries. The system generates an overdue response report that includes the inquiry date, the response due date, the responsible business unit, and the response completion date, if completed. The report calculates a total response time (in business days) and the number of business days late, if applicable. Each week, responsible managers track response times and follow up as necessary. We reviewed the report as of March 29, 2002 and noted the Department met the three to five day target in the great majority of instances. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 55**

***Enhance the ability of staff of DCFS Hotlines to respond to requests for general information; use common tools to be shared by all Hotline staff at DCFS (CAHL, Public Inquiry, Foster Care Payment, Foster Care Recruitment, Adoptions Recruitment).***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended the Department enhance the ability of DCFS Hotline staff to respond to requests for general information. The audit suggested Hotline staff accomplish this by either transferring calls to the public inquiry section or answering the inquiry themselves.

Subsequent to the audit, the Department prepared information packets for hotline staff to use in answering caller requests for general information. If the Hotline staff is not able to assist with the information requested, the Hotline staff forwards the caller to another source, such as the Public Inquiry section or the DPSS Inquiry line, depending on the information requested. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 56**

***Implement quality control and customer satisfaction assurance procedures at the Foster Care Recruitment Hotline modeled on those used for the Adoptions Recruitment Hotline.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

In an effort to improve the quality of service provided to potential foster parents, the audit recommended the Department implement a survey to determine the effectiveness of the Foster Care Recruitment Hotline. The survey results would help determine customer satisfaction with the service received and help to solicit suggestions for improvement.

For several years the Department has been sending customer service surveys to persons who call into the Foster Recruitment Hotline. However, the Department has not tallied or analyzed the completed surveys. Until they do, this recommendation will remain in progress.

**Recommendation 58**

***Perform an annual customer satisfaction survey of all foster parents and all adoptive parents. Continue efforts to survey emancipated foster youth. Consider surveying mandated reporters and families in voluntary family maintenance programs.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

In an effort to provide better focus on customer service, the audit recommended DCFS perform an annual customer satisfaction survey of all foster and adoptive parents to better meet customer needs and preferences. The audit also recommended the Department continue its efforts to survey emancipated foster youth, mandated reporters and families in voluntary family maintenance programs.

The Department conducted an Adoption Satisfaction Survey in November 2001, its first Foster Parent survey in the fall of 2001 and a Transitional Housing Survey in the summer 2001. The Department plans to distribute the Adoption survey at future Adoption Saturday Finalization Events held approximately three times a year. However, we note the Department may be better able to gauge customer satisfaction by conducting the survey mid way into the adoption process, instead of at the conclusion of the process. At the conclusion, the adoptive parents may be pleased the process is completed and, as a result, could be biased in their evaluation of the process.

Department management has successfully analyzed data from the Transitional Housing Survey and has initiated additional surveys as part of an initiative to enhance the Department's services to emancipated youth. However, the Department has performed limited analysis of the data obtained through the Adoption and Foster Parent surveys

and has not yet utilized the information obtained in these surveys to modify operations, as appropriate. Once this is done, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE RECOMMENDATION**

#### **Recommendation 60**

***Establish an infrastructure sub-team with a champion and functional experts.***

#### **Current Status: NOT IMPLEMENTED**

The audit found inferior working conditions in the Department. For example, the auditors found that some employees shared desks and phones and that some buildings were crowded and poorly lit. The audit recommended DCFS establish a team responsible for improving working conditions throughout the Department.

The Department has not yet established a team responsible for evaluating and improving the condition of the Department's office environment. Accordingly, we consider this recommendation not implemented.

#### **Recommendation 61**

***Provide employees with appropriate tools to ensure safety and efficient job performance.***

#### **Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

The audit recommended the Department formally assess the types of portable equipment and fixed assets (e.g., cellular telephones, copy and fax machines) social worker staff use in order to ensure efficient and safe job performance.

The Department has addressed some of the issues the audit identified (e.g., it upgraded and expanded its number of copier machines in late 2000), but it has not yet completed a formal analysis and developed a corrective action plan as the audit recommended. Once this is done, we will consider this recommendation implemented.

**ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEMS RECOMMENDATIONS****Recommendation 63**

***Develop a balanced scorecard of throughput, process, and outcome measures for the Department. This should be accomplished through the upcoming strategic planning process.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit found that a major component of an agency's performance improvement system is the gathering, analysis, and wide internal distribution of data, which inform staff and managers on how well they are performing on measurements related to the agency's mission, goals and strategic directions. The audit recommended DCFS achieve accountability by adopting multiple methods for review of work, by emphasizing shared responsibility for critical decisions, and by establishing multiple systems of quality assurance and performance measurement.

In both its FY 2001-02 Strategic Plan – Phase II goals and its March 2002 six-month Action Plan, Department management identified various Bureaus and Divisions responsible for implementing critical goals. Additionally, as discussed previously, the Department's performance-based management system, KidStat, incorporates data analysis into daily operations. DCFS has also developed a Monthly Management Report, which includes other data related service delivery, emancipations, and adoptions. Collectively, these developments satisfy the recommendation's intent to measure the Department's improvement through multiple sources. We consider this recommendation implemented.

**Recommendation 64**

***Develop a quarterly publication, designed for distribution both inside and outside DCFS, that describes the agency mission, goals, priorities, and key performance measurement data.***

**Current Status: IN PROGRESS**

In an effort to educate external stakeholders and garner support and resources for agency programs, the audit recommended that the Department develop a quarterly publication, designed for distribution both inside and outside DCFS. The audit recommended that the publication describe the agency mission, goals, priorities, and key performance measurement data.

Currently, the Department prepares a Monthly Management Report (MMR), for internal distribution, which includes performance measurement data. The Department's annual Strategic Goals, also for internal distribution, include the agency's mission and the goals and priorities for that year. However, the Department has not yet developed a report for

external distribution that includes agency mission, goals and priorities, and performance measure data. Accordingly, we consider this recommendation in progress.

**Recommendation 65**

***Create position of Research Director with responsibility for managing, analyzing, and communicating about DCFS' quantitative results.***

**Current Status: IMPLEMENTED**

The audit recommended DCFS create the position of Research Director with an individual with formal training and experience in research methods.

In September 2001, DCFS filled the position of Research Director. The position required a doctorate or bachelor degree in behavioral or social sciences and experience in the design, evaluation, and implementation of research projects. We consider this recommendation implemented.



**Department of Children and Family Services  
Fourth Progress Report on the Implementation of the  
PWC Management Audit Report Recommendations**

**Recommendations in Progress**

1. Develop Annual Regional Operations Plans. (#P-3)
2. Realistically link [Regional Operations Plans] desired outcomes to [actual and measurable] capacity constraints in plan development. (#P-5)
3. Align and integrate project and grants management to fully support core program operations. (#P-4)
4. Define, measure and report client outcomes. (#P-6)
5. Pilot the redesigned process. (#7)
6. Use the resources improvement team to improve the process for updating and distributing service referral information [through the Resource Directory]. (#12)
7. Expand access to up-to-date countywide service referral information throughout the Department. (#13)
8. Develop and implement a formal communications plan. (#19)
9. Improve professional development within DCFS. (#22)
10. Develop, encourage, and institutionalize team-building into the case flow process. (#23)
11. Develop and implement a succession plan. (#26)
12. Evaluate the effectiveness of various recruitment activities and expand/modify/discontinue as appropriate. (#27)
13. Conduct an employee survey every 12 months and compare the results to the baseline established in the management audit's employee survey. (#32)
14. Re-organize the uni-dimensional case processing teams into multidisciplinary teams. (#35)
15. Implement staggered shifts to better align workflow with regional staff on-duty. (#38)

16. Pilot the new organization structure with multi-disciplinary teams and staggered shifts at one or two regions, adjust as necessary, and roll-out the new structure to all offices. (#39)
17. Implement quality control and customer satisfaction assurance procedures at the Foster Care Recruitment Hotline modeled on those used for the Adoptions Recruitment Hotline. (#56)
18. Perform an annual customer satisfaction survey of all foster parents and all adoptive parents. Continue efforts to survey emancipated foster youth. Consider surveying mandated reporters and families in voluntary family maintenance programs. (#58)
19. Provide employees with appropriate tools to ensure safety and efficient job performance. (#61)
20. Develop a quarterly publication, designed for distribution both inside and outside DCFS, that describes the agency mission, goals, priorities, and key performance measurement data. (#64)

**Recommendations Not Implemented**

1. Establish an infrastructure sub-team with a champion and functional experts. (#60)

**Recommendation for which DCFS is Not Responsible**

1. Consider revising current job functions and creating new client-focused job titles. (#36). (The County Department of Human Resources is responsible for this recommendation.)